

# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED SEPT. 19. 1871.

AT THE

Annual Exhibition of the Farmers' Club,

PRINCETON,

BY NATHAN ALLEN, M. D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.



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STONE & HUSE, PRINTERS, VOX POPULI OFFICE, 21 CENTRAL STREET.

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Forty-one years ago this month, might have been seen in a quiet part of this town a youth of sixteen, leaving for the first time the parental roof, and wending his way into the western part of this State in pursuit of an education. Having spent six years in academical and collegiate studies, he repairs to a distant city which then afforded the best facilities in the country for obtaining a knowledge of medicine. Having completed here the regular course of study and attendance upon lectures, and being clothed with the credentials of admission to the medical profession, he returns to this, his native State, for permanent residence.

Now, after the toil and confinement of over thirty years, in the practice of this profession, in one of our leading cities, he appears to-day before you to make, for the first time in his life, a set, formal speech. It is with no ordinary emotions that I attempt to discharge this duty. Having no natural aptitude for public speaking, or experience in the same, as nearly all my talking, for these thirty years, has been either in the sick-room or private office, to very small audiences, I come before you to-day under great disadvantages, and must crave your indulgence by allowing me, on this occasion, to read, or talk, rather than make any attempt at display by the powers of rhetoric or oratory.

While I appear before you, comparatively as a stranger, to address a society devoted to agricultural pursuits, in which, practically, I have not of late been engaged, I hope to say some things which may prove of mutual interest—things which may not be altogether new or strange, nor foreign to the more important objects for which you have this day assembled.

But here in the outset I wish to make my public acknowledgment to that over-ruling Providence, which ordered my birth and

early training in this place, distinguished no less for intelligence and morality, than for health and devotion to agricultural pursuits. The greatest gift that any human being can receive, in this world is that of a sound constitution, which can come alone from parents perfectly healthy in body and mind. The next greatest blessing is, that this constitution be early strengthened and developed in accordance with natural laws, while at the same time the mental habits and moral character receive proper training and the right direction. To these blessings I confess the strongest possible obligations: first, to the Creator; second, to parents; and third, to the healthy, educational and moral influences of this quiet, rural town.

And what impressions—what thoughts and suggestions—so naturally come before the mind, on this occasion, as the changes that have occurred here between the present time and forty or fifty years ago? To those of you who have lived here all this period, or have grown up here, taking a daily view of the same scenes and things, perhaps for the hundredth or thousandth time, these changes are not so obvious or striking. But upon returning here, after long absence, these scenes and changes make very different impressions. Let the store-house of memory be laid open, and the remembrances of the past be compared with the realities of the present and your own personal knowledge. In this way, it may be seen what progress—what improvement—has here been made, and what are the prospects of future advancement.

In returning to this place, after an absence of so prolonged a period, the most striking change, in the first place, is in the views which are obtained from the hills and high grounds. Then, it looked as though the ground was almost covered with woods, with here and there only an opening for cultivation; but now, how naked are these hills, and what a broad sweep the eye can take in, unobstructed by tree or forest! Once what splendid and beautiful wood-lots were here seen!—how large, tall, and thickly stood the trees! But, alas, the woodman's axe has found here much work! What an immense amount of labor has been performed in removing these forests! And, if no one can figure up how much money has been coined in this way, you can doubtless tell, at least some of you, what has become of portions of it.

By this change in the woodland, several thousand acres must have been added to the improveable land of the town. The whole area or territory of Princeton is represented as comprising 22,587 acres, and occupied as follows: Farms, 172; land improved,

18,144 acres; woodland, 4,287 acres; English mowing land, 2,264 acres; meadow land mown, 717 acres, making 2,981 acres improved for hay. Only 510 acres are reported as cultivated for grain and vegetables, divided as follows: Indian corn, 176 acres; potatoes, 142; oats, 59; barley, 56; leaving less than 75 acres for wheat, rye, turnips, &c. We have, then, 3,491 acres cultivated for hay, grain and vegetables, and as there are only 108 acres reported as unimprovable land, the balance (14,545 acres) must be improved for pasturage or grazing. This great amount of pasture-land, relatively so large compared with the mowing and tillage, demonstrates what feature in agriculture is, and always has been, most predominant in this town, that is pasturing or grazing; and this is particularly adapted to three purposes, viz: dairying, stock-raising, and fattening cattle. And such natural pasture-land! in richness and fertility, no better or more productive can be found in Massachusetts, or any other State. This land may be no richer or more fertile than it was fifty years ago—perhaps it is not so much so—but then its value has greatly increased, yes, probably more than doubled. The same cannot be said of the mowing and tillage land. It is somewhat doubtful whether even as many acres are now cultivated for grain and vegetables as there were fifty years ago. In fact, it is highly probable that a greater number of acres must then have been worked over to obtain the same amount of produce, as now by improved modes of cultivation, to say nothing of the greater variety and better quality of the crop. An acre of land yields at the present day, it is thought, far more than it formerly did.

The population of Princeton in 1820 was only 18 less than in 1870, and the inhabitants then were supported almost wholly by what they raised on the ground, whereas now, large quantities of flour, with corn and other eatables, are annually consumed here, which are imported from abroad. While we cannot determine the exact difference in the number of acres cultivated, or in the amount of crops produced, between the two periods, one thing is very evident, there has been great improvement in the modes of cultivating the land, as well as in the greater variety and better quality of the crops produced. If our fathers and grandfathers could have witnessed your exhibition, to-day, of vegetables, fruit, and flowers, they would certainly have been greatly astonished.

But while there have been changes in the extent and manner of cultivating the land, the hills and rocks remain unchanged. Perhaps there may be more stone-walls here than there were fifty years ago,



but most of these walls were laid in the previous fifty years, and but little, we suspect, in the last twenty-five. The cause of this cannot, we think, be found in the fact, as alleged in some other places, that the rocks, small and great, were all used up! Like the goods of some auctioneers, there are some more of the same sort left, and can readily be found, if not above ground, certainly not far below the surface!

But think for a moment, what an immense amount of toil, labor and strength has been expended in the construction of these walls! Such exercise was most assuredly calculated to develop and strengthen the muscles, to give physical vigor and stamina; and such, too, were the constitutions our forefathers possessed! But, alas, *when* and *where* shall we find their like again!

The hills and stone-walls remind us of something else closely identified with them, as well as with the land, that is, the *roads*. When locations or sites for houses were selected by the first settlers of New England, they usually chose the hills or the highest points of ground, and then constructed their roads over these hills, not realizing the difficulty of changing the location of the roads, or the great advantage of travelling on more level ground. If the first settlers here did not thus locate their dwellings and roads in all instances, they certainly did those about the centre of the town, and especially their meeting-house. While most of the old roads here remain where they were first laid out, several new ones have been built to shorten distances or avoid the hills, and in some instances, perhaps, to accommodate different neighborhoods or travellers from other towns through the place. Considering that Princeton has over seventy miles of public highway, and that the ground, as a whole, is unusually hilly and rocky—there not being, it is said, an acre of level ground by itself in the place—we may justly say that the roads are remarkably good, and that such is the uniform testimony of travellers. The town certainly deserves much credit for its public spirit and liberal expenditure in this direction.

Perhaps no one thing sets off a place to better advantage, or shows improvement more readily, than its buildings and dwelling-houses. In this respect, Princeton stands well, and has a favorable record. In 1797, President Dwight, of Yale College, in passing through the town, notices in his journal that the houses of the inhabitants here indicated much taste and prosperity. Testimony similar to this has been borne by other writers describing the place, and particularly of late, by newspaper correspondents. The last census



reports 266 dwelling-houses, with 279 families, making only 13 more families than dwellings, and with an average of only five persons to each house or family. We should suppose that neither individuals nor families need be crowded here for want of room, which is very different from what is found in most of the villages and cities in New England. When the first census was taken, we find this curious fact reported, that there were two more dwelling-houses than families in the town, which was a very rare occurrence.

There has been decided improvement in the houses in one respect, that is, in *painting*. Once a house was found here and there dark-brown or wood color, and many painted red or yellow; but now, nearly all are painted white, with green blinds, which, especially when the buildings stand on high ground, gives a very fine appearance, and can be seen at great distances. This improvement is more marked within a mile or so of the centre of the town, where, too, several dwelling-houses have recently been built. Perhaps no change is so marked as that from the old-fashioned tavern to the large, commodious public houses which you now have. They are an ornament to the place, and, from their elevated positions, are seen at great distances; besides, these establishments, from the manner they have been kept and occupied, have given the place a favorable notoriety abroad, and we hope they will always continue to sustain the good name and reputation which they have already acquired.

In one respect, Princeton was in advance of almost any other town in the State, that was in having early in its history a Town-House, devoted exclusively to town business. For this distinction, it was indebted very much to the munificence of Mr. Boylston. Connected with the religious history of the town, there have been several changes in the houses of worship, and the two which you now have, would be considered quite an improvement in convenience and looks over their predecessor; but, would that we could see again that large meeting-house, of olden style, as it once stood on the top of this hill, with its sounding-board always ready to fall, its high, square pews and noisy seats, its lofty galleries, and tall steeple reaching to the clouds! Impressions were here made upon many youthful minds, not so much by instruction from the pulpit, as by other sounds and scenes that will never be erased from the memory.

Let us now advert to another matter which may not be altogether so complimentary. The last report of the Board of Education for the State returns the valuation of all your school-houses at \$2,000; while many years ago, they were returned at a valuation of \$5,000,

showing a large depreciation. Perhaps there has been some change in the scale of valuation to account for this difference; perhaps these houses may be convenient and comfortable, and perhaps, too, there may be room for improvement. In certain places in this vicinity the complaint is made of great extravagance, a wasteful expenditure of the people's money, in the erection of large school-houses for show and ornament. Now, while no occasion should be given for such charges, the other extreme should also be avoided.

The same report of the Board of Education contains other items referring to this town. It seems that the amount of money appropriated for schools has not kept up with the increased valuation of the place, and does not correspond, in this respect, to that of many other towns. In the tables of this report where a comparison is instituted, (including all the towns and cities in the Commonwealth,) between the amount of money thus appropriated and the valuation of each place, together with the rate of expenditure upon each scholar, we regret to find that Princeton does not stand in so favorable a position as it might and ought. We would suggest that the School Committee carefully canvass this whole matter, and see if they cannot gather up such facts and arguments in their next annual report as to bring about a better state of things.

In former years, this town has been somewhat distinguished for its large number of educated men—probably a greater number in proportion to its inhabitants than any other town in the County or State, where there has been no permanent literary institution. Nearly forty natives of this place have been to college, and more than one-half that number have entered the ministry. Some of these persons have been distinguished, not only for talent and scholarship, but for wide personal influence and general reputation. It has been said, that for half a century there was no period of time when there was not some one individual from Princeton enrolled as a member of college; but we regret to say that this remark cannot be said of the place of late years.

This town has also had some notoriety in the matter of school-teachers. "Master Woods," so called for more than half a century, was the first teacher here, and, if reports be true, richly earned the name of "*Master*," in this business. For a long time the place provided not only its own teachers, but had many representatives following this vocation in adjoining and distant towns. In the recollection of some present, so numerous was this class that twenty-seven teachers could be counted in one school-district, including ten

in one family ! These ten persons taught nearly one hundred distinct schools, and had under their instruction over five thousand different pupils. Will it not be difficult to find, at the present day, any one family having such a representation ?

Let us now turn to another class of facts which may prove more interesting, viz: The civil condition and character of the people. The number belonging to what are denominated, generally, the abnormal classes here has always been small. The last census reports one person blind, one deaf and dumb, three idiotic, and five insane; in the House of Correction, none; and not one in Jail or State Prison. The remark was lately made by some wag—that to test the real character of a people, we must take, not those confined for physical defects or moral delinquencies in public institutions, but the proportionate number outside—at large—who ought to be sent there ! We think the application of this test in a rural community like Princeton, where every individual is so well known, would result as favorably as the other. As to what are called the dependent or pauper class, it has always been smaller here than in most places. The number of paupers at your Almshouse has averaged only seven or eight persons for many years, and the number partially supported outside, by private or public charity, is still smaller. In fact, we think there has always been much less suffering here from poverty than in most places, and that there are very few individuals, or families, but can live comfortably and pay their honest debts—we might say, their doctors' bills, as the payment of these is generally the hardest, and the last to pay. That there should be so little poverty, or pauperism, may be explained in part from the great industry and economy of the people, but more from their remarkably correct and temperate habits. There are few places where the temperance reform has met with greater or more complete success. It is stated, on good authority, that fifty years ago there was only one strictly total-abstinence man in the town, but now, we are informed that there is only one man really addicted to intemperance.

The valuation of the place has continued to increase slowly from its first settlement, and has more than doubled within fifty years. It is now \$896,375, and if it was divided equally among all the inhabitants, it would give a little over \$700 to every man, woman and child. And, notwithstanding the very small number of poor people, we presume there are some that would consider themselves very well off if they only had \$700, cash in hand.

There is another source of information which may throw some light upon these changes. The registration report published at the State House I examined for over thirty years, and was surprised to find that the number of marriages, births, and deaths have all been growing less and less. Yes! less marriages, less births, and less deaths. This might suit some political economists; and, undoubtedly, all here would mite in saying, less deaths; but, perhaps, in the matter of marriages a few would deem the report less satisfactory.

The population of the town has remained singularly stationary. By the census of 1870—just taken—it was one thousand two hundred and seventy-nine, only eighteen more than in 1820, when it was one thousand two hundred and sixty-one. The largest number it ever reached was in 1840, one thousand three hundred and forty-seven, and then in 1860, it came down to one thousand two hundred and one. The most rapid increase it ever made at any one period, was just before the Revolution, 1775, and then between that period and 1790.

For a long series of years, the number of marriages has averaged only eight each year,—making the rate of one to a little over one hundred and sixty persons; whereas, in many places, the marriage-rate is twice that, and in the whole State, the rate is one to a little over one hundred. And, for a long time, the birth and death-rates here have been approximating, every year, nearer and nearer to each other. For instance, the number of births from 1860 to 1870 averaged yearly twenty-three, and the deaths twenty-one—making one birth to fifty-four persons, and one death to sixty,—which are much lower rates than are found in most other places, or even in the whole State. But the difference in the marriage or death-rate between the present time and that of forty or fifty years ago, does not seemingly make such changes in a place as that in the birth-rate. There have certainly been great changes here in this respect. The School or Census Report for 1840 shows just twice the number of children here, between the ages of five and fifteen, over the report of 1870, and twenty years prior to that, the relative number and difference must have been still greater. The last School Report gives only two hundred and thirty-five scholars attending ten schools,—making on an average just twenty-three scholars to each school, though some are undoubtedly larger and some smaller. But what a contrast does this present to the schools of forty and fifty years ago, numbering then, many of them, fifty and sixty scholars! For illustration, by the first census ever taken of Massachusetts, in 1765, the whole number of



inhabitants in Princeton was two hundred and eighty-four; the number under sixteen years of age was one hundred and forty-seven, and over sixteen, one hundred and thirty-seven, making more than one-half the population, at that time, children. In the census of 1860, almost one hundred years afterwards, the whole population was returned at one thousand two hundred and one, and the number under fifteen was only three hundred and seventy-three, and that over fifteen years of age, eight hundred and twenty-eight, making, then, only one-fourth children—thus diminishing one-half.

Again: What a change has taken place in the size of families! Fifty years ago the families here numbering six, eight, ten and twelve children were quite common, but now, how rare! so much so as to attract public attention, and call out remarks not always commendatory. Once the parents of such families were regarded by the wise and good as benefactors of the race, but now, what a change in this respect is found in almost every community—a change in feeling, in public sentiment, and fashion. It is not respectable, it is not popular—yea, more, it is regarded unfashionable, if not indecent, now, to have large families! Ah! That is a relic of a former generation: a barbarous, if not vulgar age! Such encumbrances as children do not accord with our present standard of living; we have too many artificial wants; the styles and fashions of the day must be followed, let the sacrifices be what they may. In this respect Princeton is not singular. The same changes in population are taking place in most country towns. Young people leave the old homestead, the farms and rural districts for the village and the city, and some emigrate to the far west. But remember that there are now only half as many children as there were fifty years ago, either to emigrate or to settle at home. It is said, we well know, that where so many young people remove from a place, it could not be expected that there would be so much increase in population. This is all true; such a constant drain upon our country towns, especially agricultural districts, must make a great difference. But then our comparison is made, in part, as to the average number of children to each family now on the ground, not of those gone. Take the same number of young persons marrying now, and a corresponding number fifty or one hundred years ago, and compare the results. We venture the assertion that the diminution of offspring in the average to each family is nearly one-half. There must be between three and four children, on an average, to every married couple, to keep the stock good in numbers, considering that two-fifths of all persons die before reaching adult

life, and that some persons will always remain single. And when the point of time is reached that the original producing stock is not supplied from year to year, this decrease will take place more rapidly. In a staid, permanent population, it is not difficult to verify this statement. Let any one do it in his own neighborhood or circle of acquaintances, and he will be surprised at the results. But, notwithstanding this gradual diminution of births, it seems that there has lately been an actual increase of population in Princeton. From 1850 to 1860 it lost one hundred and seventeen inhabitants, but from 1860 to 1870 it gained seventy-eight. Now, this gain is made up partly by new families moving into the town, and partly by the increase of a foreign element, numbering about one hundred persons. During these ten years, there have been among this class over thirty births, making almost one-seventh of all the births in town. One curious fact the census shows, is that not a single colored person is reported as a resident here for thirty or forty years.

Connected with this change in population, we are led to look at other changes. Having noticed some marked evidences of thrift and improvement, we may say, it is not equal or alike throughout the town. It is obvious that some parts or neighborhoods are showing decay or neglect; old cellars, old orchards, lands once cultivated thrown into pastures. The increase of inhabitants, and improvements have been more in the central part of the town, and in what is called East Princeton. The change here has been owing principally to the only business, aside from agriculture—that has ever proved permanently successful in the place—that is chair-manufacturing. Attempts were made, many years since, to introduce the shoe business, and the census of 1845 reported eighty-five males and fifteen females working at this trade, but in 1865, it reported only eleven shoemakers. In the course of fifty years there have been, in a small way, several other kinds of mechanical or manufacturing business introduced, but they were not attended with much success. By the richness of the soil, the unevenness of the ground, the lack of water power, and the want of public conveyances, nature itself seems to have determined that the inhabitants here should earn their livelihood by tilling the land, even by the sweat of the brow. This reminds us of a curious statement in the census of 1860, where the business pursuits of the inhabitants of every town in the State are given. For Princeton it gives two hundred and twenty-three farmers, but under the column headed "*Farm Laborers*," where other agricultural towns are largely represented, a *blank* stands for Prince-

ton, implying that there are no farm laborers, as a class, residing in the town. The inference would be that the farmers here do their own work, for it is not possible that they are mere fancy-farmers—gentlemen at large; the evidences of hard work are too apparent on every side to justify any such supposition.

And here, at this very time and place, we wish to put in a plea for farming. It is alleged that young men, at the present day, leave the farm, and turn away from agricultural pursuits, to avoid *hard work*; that they seek the village, the city and the west, where a livelihood may be obtained by mechanical ingenuity, by trade, by commerce, by mental labor of some kind.

It is also said that our young women are becoming every year more and more disinclined to house-work, and that the confinement and drudgery attending domestic life is regarded more or less as a menial and distasteful service. There is too much truth, we fear, in both these charges; and we regret to say that they indicate marked evidences of physical degeneracy, if not of mental decline, or, if you please, a change of taste, or of opinion, or of habits of life, which, if we consult the history of other nations and other times, bodes ill for the civil condition and political prospects of our hitherto favored soil, as well as the moral status of coming generations. One cause of this change is that the more rational and important objects of living are not properly set before us in early life, and that the visions of youth are too frequently captivated by outward appearances, and the reports of successful adventurers in the world, which are the exceptional cases. The sentiment becoming so generally prevalent among our young people that they must, and will get rid of *hard work*, is a most pernicious doctrine, indicating that the type of our present civilization is not what it ought to be, and that if this sentiment is to increase till it controls the feeling and action of the rising generation, it foretakens a declension, not only in the material interests of a people, but, ultimately, in mental culture and moral achievement. *Hard work*, whether on the farm or in the kitchen, we maintain, is honorable—is a law of nature—is indispensable in order to secure good health and long life, as well as the greatest amount of happiness and intellectual attainment. This hard work should include not merely the mechanical exercise of the muscles, but every organ of the human body, as connected with the highest development of the brain. No individual or people ever obtained distinction without much hard work. This law of exercise may



perhaps be illustrated in agricultural pursuits more strikingly than anywhere else.

In order to secure the greatest amount of happiness and success in any department of life, among other things, good health is an indispensable requisite. In this respect, the farmer has peculiar advantages, far more favorable than any other calling. The most important conditions for securing good health are embraced in these four things, viz: *exercise, good air, plain food, and regular habits*, and no one of these can possibly be left out. Now, there is no place, pursuit, trade, or business, where all these conditions can be so well obtained at the same time, and in so high a degree, as that on the farm. The various kinds of work here—some of it hard, too—are peculiarly calculated to develop and strengthen the whole body, calling into exercise the greatest variety of muscles, and all the leading organs of the system. The more nearly every part of the body can be exercised in perfect harmony with every other part, the greater the average amount of health, and the longer the life. To use a common phrase, "*the wear and tear*" comes, then, more equally or alike on all the parts in accordance with natural laws.

One great cause or source of disease is, that almost every person has some weak spot—some part or organ which has not been properly developed and strengthened, or which has been weakened and injured by over-exercise or exposure—and then, in case any derangement or morbid action occurs in the system, it all goes, as the saying is, to "that weak spot." Multitudes die, after years of suffering, of wasting and pain, when the starting point or origin of the disease was a very little thing, but the evil was not checked or cured in its first stages as it should have been. Frequently, parties are so situated that they cannot give the attention requisite for relief or cure.

Exercise, in performing the great variety of work required on the farm, is calculated better than any other kind of labor or business to develop, not only every part of the body in accordance with its own laws, but the situation and position of the farmer afford the greatest possible facilities for the preservation of health by complying with the laws of hygiene. Two of the most important conditions of health, viz: good air and plain food, he certainly has at his command in a far higher degree than is found in most other situations. In respect to pure air, the farmer has advantages over all others, as most of his work is performed in the open air, under the canopy of

the high heavens! filled with the purest atmosphere, and if his sleeping apartments by night are not thoroughly ventilated, it must generally be his own fault. And as to obtaining plain, wholesome food, farm-life has peculiar advantages, especially in the matter of pure milk, fresh vegetables and ripe fruit. Then, as to regular habits in the hours of labor, in the regularity and ample time for meals, in retiring to bed at the early hours of night, and rising early in the morning, together with temperance in eating and drinking, where can these habits be formed so well, or be preserved so easily, as on the farm? Where can all the great laws of life and health be observed with less infringement or temptation than on the farm? What a contrast is presented in these respects between life spent here and that in the city, particularly in fashionable society! Why, according to statistical facts, a purely city population would run out if it was not constantly recruited from the country! And, even with this fresh supply, the average length of life in the city is only about one-half as long as in the country. The excitements of various kinds, the strife and competition in business, the chances and uncertainties in trade, the fluctuations of the market, as well as the sudden changes in all financial matters—these, at the present day, have a powerful effect upon the physical system, either by violating or impairing the laws of health and life—whereas, their influence over those devoted exclusively to agricultural pursuits is comparatively small. In fact, all the agencies that interfere seriously with the even tenor of life, or are prolific in scattering the seeds of disease, prevail far less in farm-life than in any other business, or calling. To show that these statements are not mere assertions, let us inquire what is the testimony of figures:—According to the registration report of deaths in Massachusetts, published now for about thirty years, and preserved with more accuracy and completeness than anywhere else in the country, the greatest longevity is found to obtain in agricultural life. In the ten different occupations as given in these reports, the cultivators of the earth stand as a class at the head, reaching, on an average, the age of sixty-four and ninety one-hundredths, while that of the next class, merchants, is forty-nine and twenty-three one-hundredths; that of mechanics of all kinds, forty-seven and ninety one-hundredths; and that of shoemakers is only forty-three and eighty-two one-hundredths. Thus we see that farmers, as a class, live on an average, fifteen years longer than merchants, seventeen years longer than mechanics, and twenty-one years longer than shoemakers. This is not a matter of opinion or guess-work, but the result of exact statistics, an exhibit of facts, not

gathered in Great Britain, or in the Western States, but collected here in the good old Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including this place as well as all the other towns in the County of Worcester! And, is fifteen or twenty years' addition to our lives of no consequence, especially to that part of life which is capable of the greatest amount of usefulness, as well as happiness? The fact is, farmers, as a whole, do not realize certain advantages they possess over and above all other classes in the community. And what has recently surprised somewhat the public, is that the interests of agriculture are said to be declining in various parts of New England. As this subject is being seriously discussed in several periodicals, and involves questions of great importance to our people, it may not be inappropriate to notice it here somewhat in detail.

For many years it has been observed that the sons of farmers were inclined to leave the old homestead and engage in other pursuits, and a careful inquiry, by means of the census reports and through other sources, has shown that there has been a steady decrease of population in the purely agricultural towns or districts, especially in those located away from any village or off from the railroad. For instance, the census shows that some twenty towns in this county have lost in population in ten or fifteen years, and that the six towns adjoining this place, with the exception of West Boylston, have not, as a whole, as many inhabitants now as they had fifteen or twenty years ago. In the four western counties of the State, particularly in Berkshire, the decline in population in the farming towns is still more striking. The same fact holds true in many of the purely agricultural districts in the eastern part of the State. It is found that very many small farms, and now and then large ones, have been bought up by foreigners (whose style of farming in many respects is different), and that this element, which has long been multiplying in our villages and cities, is now also rapidly increasing in our country towns.

The Report on the Statistics of Labor, presented to our last Legislature, represents a very general complaint — an uneasy, dissatisfied state of things, among farmers, on the subject of labor. It is said that the wages demanded are higher than farmers can afford to pay; that the kind of help offered, being mostly foreign, is not reliable; and that the number of purely American men, who can be hired as laborers, is growing less and less every year. As a consequence, some farmers are selling their farms, others are cultivating less land, and others still are exchanging the old style of farming for that of

gardening, of raising early vegetables, or just those articles that the market most demands. From these, and many other facts, it is quite evident that a change is gradually taking place, not only in the extent and mode of farming, but in the number and character of farm laborers in New England. This change of laborers must, in process of time, affect more or less the whole business of agriculture. Will not these laborers, by their industry and economy, gradually accumulate means, so as to buy up the land? May not the profits of the business accrue more to the employee than to the employer? And under the circumstances, will not the chances increase of failing health to the farmer, which, with untoward influences from his family and other sources, will induce, or compel him to sell out?

There can be no question but that a radical and important change is already taking place in our farming interests, and that the evidences, furnished in this official Report on Labor, by almost sixty different witnesses, including farmers, merchants, clergymen, physicians, and others, residing in eleven counties in the State, cannot easily be explained away, or controverted. Whenever a careful and thorough investigation shall be made on this whole subject, through another report, or by other means, we think the evidences obtained will be still more abundant and convincing.

The *New York Evening Post*, in an able article referring to this Report, says, "The results agree fully with numerous facts that come casually to every-one's knowledge. It is only in New England that we hear of farms once flourishing, but now running to waste. It is only in New England that we hear of the almost incredible fact of the abandonment of a railroad in use for many years. It is only in New England that we hear of country towns in which comfortable dwelling-houses can scarcely be sold at any price, or can be bought cheap enough to be taken down, brought to New York, and here be set up again. The returns of the census, too, as far as published, bear out the evidences of the witnesses examined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the most remarkable manner, showing, as they do, a serious decline in agricultural wealth and agricultural production. The truth of the picture cannot well be doubted. It would be more difficult to determine the causes of these remarkable changes." Here is the trouble — "*the causes.*" But, to cure disease or any morbid action, it becomes necessary to know something about the cause.

Though, in the opinion of some persons, there has been a change both in the climate and soil of New England, still it cannot be sufficient to make much difference in its population; neither can the



decline arise for the want of a market, or encouragement on the part of the State, by liberal expenditures for agricultural reports, premiums, exhibitions, &c. But this decline arises from a very different source: it is for the want of young men, in sufficient numbers, of the right spirit, stamp and character, filled with zeal, energy and determination to carry on this work for life. If our young men continue for years to come to leave the farm for other pursuits, as they have for the past twenty or thirty years, and the number of children born to the manor diminish in each successive generation, as they have in the last two or three, what is to be the result? Why may not the same change occur in reference to farm-work, as we find, within doors, in domestic service and house-work, which now depends mostly upon foreign help? In case of such changes, what is to be the effect upon the constitutions, the physical stamina and vitality of our people?

The general neglect of house-work in the training and domestic habits of our girls, is producing a serious injury to the health and character of our women. This neglect of the most important of all kinds of exercise, together with various other influences and agencies operating in society, is, to say the least, fast disqualifying and disabling many of them for the performance of certain duties as wives and mothers, which the laws of their own nature, as well as those of their Creator, have laid upon them. Now, if manual labor is to be given up more and more on the part of our young men—especially farm-work—if the pursuits of trade, of mechanical and manufacturing industry, of professional business, and other kinds of employment, requiring but little exercise except that of the brain, are to be sought and followed generally by our young men, what effect will it have, in the course of time, upon physical organization? Will it not diminish its muscular power, its vital forces, and tend to develop unduly its nerve-tissue at the expense of important organs?

This change of organization is one of vast consequence, much more important than what appears on the surface of things, and far more reaching in its influence than what can now be fully comprehended. This leads me to explain some personal views and labors, which it may not be inappropriate to notice here, considering the time, the place, and the occasion. Six years ago, at an Agricultural Exhibition of the Middlesex North District Society, in Lowell, in responding to a toast, I stated some facts connected with changes taking place in population—that there was relatively a gradual decrease in the number of children of American parentage in the

County and State, and that the foreign element, in this respect, was supplanting our people, suggesting that, with all the interest manifested to improve the stock of domestic animals, they certainly should not allow that of the human species, especially that of the puritan stock, to decline or run out. These remarks were reported at the time quite fully in the local newspapers, and, afterwards, some portions or the substance of them, were quoted and commented upon by the press very generally throughout the country, under the startling captions, "The Yankees Dying Out," "Decay of New England," &c.

While some thoughtful and independent thinkers were prepared in a measure for these facts, the pride and sensibility of others were so shocked, that the whole statement was either repelled at once, or allowed to make little or no impression upon them. Others were inclined to consider the subject with more favor, but looked upon the facts as doubtful and the remarks as superficial, or not well grounded; that the argument was one-sided or not complete, and that there could be no possibility of any such result occurring as the heading of the articles portended.

From the general interest thus created, I was led to a more thorough investigation of the whole subject. Works on population, census and registration reports, the history of different races and nations, together with treatises on physiology, &c., were carefully examined with reference to ascertaining, if possible, the causes of changes in population, or to discover the laws which regulated the increase or decrease of the species. The observations and inquiries for over thirty years of professional experience, which had been turned, more or less, in this direction, were also brought into requisition. As a result of these investigations, I became more thoroughly convinced than ever that there is a great universal law of increase, founded in nature; that it has its basis in the *perfect development of physical organization*, and the variations in this law depend upon deviations from this standard. It is the same law which was stamped by the Almighty upon the nature of man, when he came forth perfect, from the hands of his Creator—was pronounced "very good," and was commanded, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." And though the physical organization of men may have since passed through many changes, *this law remains the same*.

The laws of hereditary descent, so called, which have always been admitted as true to some extent, are no more nor less than a

part and parcel of this same great law; and the same evidence precisely which proves the correctness of any one of these laws, goes so far towards establishing the existence of a general law including the whole. While it has been maintained that climate, food, war, epidemics, government, &c., &c., were the principal causes both of the increase and decrease in population, we believe all these agents operate only as secondary causes or factors, and that the great primary law exists back of these, having its origin and foundation in the physical system. Still, this law is subject, aside from these external agents, to a great variety of conditions connected with the body itself, which modify very materially its operations. The most important of these conditions is a change in the balance or harmony of organization; and just in proportion as certain organs of the body become changed in their relations to each other, or a class of organs become excessively developed, the offspring will be more or less affected. If this change should be pushed to an extreme, either running into a gross animal nature or a purely nervous temperament, there are limitations fixed as to human increase in either direction, and the tendency is for any such people or race ultimately to become extinct or run out. To expound, to prove and illustrate this law, in all its bearings, would require volumes. The subject is too vast and complicated; human life is too short and crowded for any one individual to do much in such a boundless field of inquiry. This same law, with some modifications, extends throughout the whole vegetable and animal kingdoms, and aids us in a better understanding of the wonderful changes and improvements which have within a few years been brought about in the various departments of these sciences. It is the same law, combined with hereditary influences, that constitute, we believe, the two great leading principles in the recent discoveries of Darwin which he designates as "*Natural Selection*," and the "*Law of Variation*." Principles of the most vital importance are involved in the discussion of these questions, and cannot be decisively settled till long after the present disputants have slumbered in the dust. Having become thoroughly convinced of the truth and importance of this law in physiology, I prepared at different times several papers on the subject, in its various bearings, which have been published in journals, magazines, and pamphlet form, some of which have attracted considerable attention. The application of this law, particularly to account for the changes taking place in the native population of New England, has created, I may say, unusual interest.



While several popular writers have attempted, by explaining away the facts and arguments bearing on this point, to show that there has not been much decrease in our American population, and that there were no good grounds to fear declension in this respect hereafter; no one has denied but that radical changes are taking place in the physical organization of our people, especially of our women. The fact of their general ill-health, that they do not begin to have the strength and constitution which their mothers or their grandmothers had, that they cannot compare in these respects to the Irish, English and German women—these facts are so generally admitted and well attested that no one now calls them in question. But the evil extends farther: no fact is better understood by medical men than that a class or classes of female complaints, weaknesses and diseases have of late years multiplied to such extent as to interfere seriously with the laws of reproduction and maternity. The birth-rate amongst American women has diminished in the present century full one-half, while that of the Irish, Scotch, English and German women, now living in this country, is certainly twice as large as that of the Americans. There is another fact, showing a change and indicating something unnatural, that is, not more than one-half of our American women can now properly nurse their offspring. This certainly was not the case once, and it is not so now with the women of foreign descent. It is the testimony of physicians of long experience that this change is becoming more and more noticeable, and dealers in nursing bottles state that the demand for that article has of late years wonderfully increased.

There is another important change in physical organization. It is admitted by all that there has been a great increase of the complaints and diseases connected with the brain and nervous system. Both history and philosophy combine to teach us that wherever the brain and nervous system are excessively developed, and that, too, at the expense of other organs, offspring are not numerous. This fact is more striking when both parties partake of the same organization. The children, too, of such parents, through feebleness, delicacy and extreme sensitiveness, stand much less chance of reaching adult life. And what gives particular force and significance to these facts, is that this peculiar type of organization, by the laws of hereditary descent and other influences, becomes more marked and intense with every generation. It is from this source more than from any other that we have reason to apprehend a declension in the native population of New England. And without fully recognizing the effect of the

laws of *physical organization* upon the changes in population, no general statement on the subject can be correctly laid down, or satisfactory conclusions be obtained. The *future*, rather than the *past*, is to settle this question; for there are sometimes *laws* or *principles* which cannot be fully tested or settled by the past or the present. This *requires time* for a fair test or a complete development. The remark may prove no less true here than that made in respect to another department of the moral government of God, viz: that "though the laws of the Almighty grind slow, they grind *sure*."

It should be borne in mind that when the waning or decline of New England is spoken of, it is not understood that the land is at all to be depopulated, for there is no question but what it is to become more and more populous in each generation or every decade of years. Neither is it supposed that the change will consist wholly in a diminution of the descendants of its first settlers, but rather in a radical change of their general character and leading peculiarities. Those distinctive traits that marked the Puritans will pass away. The general state of society, the leading influences of the times will become essentially different. In fact, we are even now passing through the change, in some respects, to a better, in others, to a worse state of things. The type of our civilization is assuming more and more a *pure money basis*, resting too much upon an *artificial state of society*, which, to say the least, is *unnatural* and *unwholesome*. Modern manners are becoming more and more artificial; the simplicity, trustfulness and self-abnegation of the early days of New England are disappearing before the greed of gain and unscrupulousness of acquisition. Wealth is exalted above probity, and material interests outweigh spiritual, prompting men to live for the present and forget the future. This change is menacing; what its results may actually be, no one, perhaps, can safely predict, for we believe that it is one of the peculiarities of Infinite wisdom so to guard against the infraction of its laws, that, seemingly, counteracting or destructive forces shall be overruled and made either to disappear or minister in the end to good. But this belief should not be suffered to breed in us an indifference to the evil, or a sluggish apathy, or a dereliction of duty, convinced as we are that it is our part to learn and to obey the moral as well as the natural and civil laws under which we live, seeking to bring the latter into harmony with the former, and to find our highest happiness in such efforts. But though we cannot foretell the precise course which these

changes are to run, or the limits that may be set to them, we do not hesitate to say that when money is made the highest object of exertion—fashion, the paramount law of social intercourse—then, of course, money and show, recklessness and extravagance, will often supplant the humbler virtues of private life, and engross the thoughts and affections to the infinite detriment of health of body and health of mind. A false standard or rule of life cannot but work mischief. The wants of such a standard become wonderfully multiplied, and its demands exorbitant. Its workings are greatly diversified. Some are absorbed in the passion of accumulation, while others are most gratified in the various means and expedients for attracting public attention, or making a great display. The simple manners, the frugal habits, the slow gains, the downright honesty, those homely virtues of our ancestors are not the qualities most sought or practiced. These traits or elements of character are too old-fashioned, do not comport with the spirit of the times, or the objects most aimed at in life.

In this state of society, such is the rush after gain and fashion as to tax to the utmost every muscle and nerve of the body as well as faculty of the mind. It is needless to say that the excitement, the strife, the competition, &c., must affect unfavorably the physical organization; must develop unduly, not only the brain and nervous system, but a class of mental faculties not of the highest order or of the most elevated character. For when this type of civilization is carefully analyzed, it becomes very evident that it is not based chiefly upon the intellectual or moral nature of man, but more upon *his selfish faculties*, that, inasmuch as it is not in harmony with the most important part of his being, nor with the laws of the Creator, it cannot be permanent but must change and pass away. Still, this change may work slowly, may not affect very sensibly those now upon the stage, but, if our theory of propagation or of human increase is correct, it must show its effects powerfully upon each successive generation. It is in consideration of this view of the law of population, that such a state of society in its future aspects looks so unpropitious. Besides, we may add that it is decidedly unfavorable to the great interests of Agriculture in a variety of ways. But neither time nor space will allow me to dwell longer on this topic. Having digressed somewhat from the main subject of this address, I wish now to call your attention to a few other changes in Princeton.

Fifty years ago, only here and there a family in the large cities, or some invalid under the direction of a physician, left a comfortable

home in the summer to seek the benefits of a change of air and the sea-breezes at some quiet place upon the sea-shore. The advantages which the mountain, the hill country, or the rural district afforded for health or pleasure were scarcely thought of. Once it would have been difficult to convince the most intelligent and thoughtful residents in this town of the change that, in this respect, is here witnessed every summer. Now, what are the particular advantages of this place for health, and to attract summer company? Probably no one thing in the world conduces so much to the comfort and health of the body as pure, good air. In some degree of purity, it is indispensable to life, and all the articles used for medicine and nourishment combined can scarcely make good its place in the animal economy. And what is singular, the real value and importance of good air, to people whether sick or well, has been but little understood or appreciated till within a few years. If such, then, is the value of air, where can it be found in its purest, its healthiest state? Some one replies by saying along the sea-shore you get a more free circulation, cooler breezes, and the bracing effects of salt; but then, on the other hand, the changes of temperature here are often too sudden, sometimes damp and chilling, and not unfrequently impregnated with odors far more disagreeable than that of Salt. Then, about cities and villages or wherever there is a dense population, the air is more or less contaminated with poisonous gases, by effluvia arising from sewers, from vaults, from accumulations of filth, from decomposition of animal and vegetable matter, while about mechanical and manufacturing places the air is vitiated by steam, by smoke, by chemical, mechanical and other impurities.

Then, again, the air around and over low grounds, large or small in territory, rich or poor in soil, is frequently rendered impure by exhalations from stagnant water, from decaying vegetable matter, from marshes, &c., and this may taint the atmosphere to great distances. Then, the air passing over a thin or sandy soil with few trees becomes too parched or dry, while that along the rivers and about large bodies of water is too moist or damp. On the other hand, the air on high mountains is too bracing and changeable either for weak or strong lungs, and cannot be considered permanently favorable to the health of any class of persons.

Where, then, can the best air be found? We answer, evidently as far away from all these exposures and impurities as possible. It must be upon high ground, sufficiently elevated above the surrounding country to obtain generally a fresh breeze from the four points



of the compass, and, at the same time, so interrupted by hill and valley as to cause not only frequent changes in the circulation, but that the whole surface should be thoroughly drained and frequently washed by the showers of heaven. The earth itself should not be too rich or highly cultivated, must not all be open land nor all covered with wood, but always green with vegetation, and dotted here and there with trees. Such is the highly-favored territory which you are here permitted to enjoy. It possesses all the conditions requisite for the purest and best air that can anywhere be found. Having given considerable attention to hygiene as connected with the laws of life and health, I venture here the opinion that there is no region or spot in New England where the atmosphere, in quantity, purity, freshness, in all its life-giving properties, can be found so well adapted in every respect for comfort, health and longevity as in this place. The general health, the average age at death, and the unusual longevity of its inhabitants for fifty years or more will confirm, we think, this opinion. In proof of this statement, what is the testimony of strangers visiting the place, especially of such as are thoughtful and discriminating in this matter? Almost the first impressions made or expressions uttered commend in high terms the atmosphere. One correspondent makes this curious remark: "The air here causes sensations like breathing champagne, and is so bracing nights as to prevent sleep." Other correspondents express themselves as follows: "The air has an invigorating buoyancy which is remarkable," "A strong breeze is almost invariably felt," "The air is most pure, and breathes health in every gale," "The air is pure and refreshing," "One breathes here no chilly fogs," "The atmosphere is ten degrees lower than on ground of ordinary elevation." Numerous expressions similar to these might be quoted from other correspondents. The facts stated in the two last quotations can be easily explained upon meteorological laws. The fogs that are generated on low ground or about ponds and streams are generally too damp and heavy to ascend to very high ground. How frequently at particular seasons of the year may be seen from these hills large quantities of vapor or fog, resting over the low grounds in this region, and extending in some directions as far as the eye can reach! Still, at certain times, such a thick mist will even spread over these hills that you can scarcely see any distance or point of land; at the same time it is not "chilly" but mild in temperature. This mist is a lower strata of clouds and is not unwholesome. As it comes suddenly, it constitutes really a pleasant interlude in the state of the weather.

The "ten degrees" of lower temperature is explained by the fact that on the hills where there is almost constantly a breeze, the air is not heated so much, either by the direct rays of the sun or by radiation from the earth, as upon "lower elevations." Connected with this part of the subject, there is another point deserving notice: on these high grounds there is scarcely any dew to cause dampness in the air nights, or moisture upon the ground mornings. While this is not unwholesome to people in health, it is particularly favorable to invalids, to persons of weak lungs, enabling them to take exercise with greater safety at all hours in the day.

There is another agent, besides air, almost as important in the production of health, viz: *good water*. Though the virtues of this article have been eulogized in the strongest terms, yet its real value as a promoter of health has never been overrated,—in fact, cannot be fully appreciated. The use of water as a beverage constitutes but a small part of its value. This consists far more in the great variety of ways in which water is used for culinary purposes, combining more or less with almost every kind of food cooked; it is in this way where water exercises either for good or evil its greatest power and influence on the human system. As its immediate effects upon the constitution are not so perceptible as some other agents, so in a quiet, gradual manner, comparatively unseen and unfelt, its evil effects become the more destructive and fatal. The injurious effects of impure water in causing disease are far more serious and extensive than is generally realized. Various diseases can frequently be traced directly to its impurities, and others indirectly; while, if we could go back, and analyze all the primary and occult causes in producing disease and derangements of the system, we should be surprised at the prominent position that bad or unwholesome water holds among these agencies.

There are certain conditions connected with the earth which are indispensable for securing the best quality of water. It must come from natural springs, suitably located in the ground where it may always be found in abundance, and at the same time be fed alone by the rains from the heavens. While the soil should be good, not too rich, it must not be composed of a clayey or lime formation. The rocks should be granite or hard, not soft, nor composed of mineral substances where, by the laws of chemical affinity, the least particle of matter, mineral or gaseous, can become mixed with the water. Neither should there be any decaying vegetable or animal substance laying upon the surface of the ground or imbedded in it, with which

the water can come in the least contact. It will be seen at once that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find all these conditions combined in any one place. But in my opinion they can be found nowhere more complete or perfect than on these very hills. Here, Nature herself has provided fountains of water and the means of purifying it far better than can be furnished by all the artificial reservoirs and expedients for filtering it that can be devised by human skill and ingenuity. Here, too, is a blessing little thought of or talked about, but invaluable to the comfort and health of all persons, whether permanent or temporary residents of the place.

There are other, though minor considerations here, favorable to recreation and health, such as the stillness and quiet of the place, inviting opportunities for exercise by riding, walking and gaming, together with freedom from dust, excitement, extreme fashions, &c. Though these attractions are common to other places, they are not often found, perhaps, to the same extent or degree. But there is one thing peculiar to this town rendering it very attractive to company, and beneficial in its influence upon the mind as well as on the body. We refer to its natural scenery and to the beautiful and extensive prospects which are here presented. The mountain (Wachusett) is the center of this attraction. Its height, its beautiful form, its easy access, and the fine views obtained from its summit, are objects of great interest. Instead of attempting ourselves any description of the place or its scenery, we prefer to use the language of others. Says one correspondent who had resided awhile here—a man of taste and letters—"Princeton lies on the lower slopes of the grand, but beautiful Wachusett. Its surface is extremely undulating, everywhere broken into valleys and ridges, and long sweeping hill-sides, furnishing some of the richest pasturage in the State. There are many beautiful landscapes—not a few rising to grandeur—scattered through almost every part of the town." Other correspondents describe it as an "*airing* place;" an "earthly paradise;" a "place formed on a ridge of hills;" a "town of magnificent hills;" a "cluster of dwellings higher than any other in the State."

Another correspondent speaks of the prospect from the summit of the mountain thus: "The view in the immediate vicinity is one of surpassing grandeur, comprising towns, villages, lakes, forests, farm-houses, and hills beyond, back to the verge of the horizon, making the earth appear like one vast bowl, and the mountain the very centre of all *things*." Here you have by another writer the following description from the same point: "Turn whichever way



you will, for more than fifty miles outwards a most glorious prospect meets the eye. Immediately below, you see the pleasant villages of Westminster, Gardner, Rutland, Leominster, Lancaster, Barre, Fitchburg and Worcester still further off; and the beautiful groves and ponds and the green fields that smile upon one from this highest point of land in Massachusetts are truly charming. Then, as you cast your eyes beyond this to the east, it looks like an unbounded sea, and you can hardly believe but you are out on the ocean. How inspiring it is to take in so much beauty and vastness from a single standpoint! And still the real beauty of the surrounding country can be realized only by going down among it and riding through it, and visiting the ponds and catching its fish, and climbing the little hills, and plucking the flowers by the river-bank, unseen at this distance—a lesson of sweet encouragement for the lowly and humble in life.”

The statement in the above paragraph, that this mountain presents the “highest land in Massachusetts,” is called in question by some, alleging that a point of the Hoosac Range in Berkshire County is a little higher; however this may be, it is certain that a much larger portion of the State can be seen from the summit of Wachusett than from any other point of land. It is a fact that land, or the points of hills in the five other New England States, can here be seen, and also that a hundred or more towns and cities can be counted. This mountain is understood to be the first land seen at sea along our coast, and its summit answers as a water-shed, where a drop of rain falling and dividing, one part may pass to the ocean through the Merrimack, while the other enters Long Island Sound by the way of the Connecticut River.

This region around Wachusett was a great resort for the Indians; its name was given by them, meaning “*Big Mountain*.” It is almost wholly within the bounds of Princeton, and is owned (comprising some six hundred acres,) by a citizen of this town. It is three miles in circumference; is, by an official survey, three thousand and twelve feet above Massachusetts bay, and rises near two thousand feet above the land at its base. This mountain is becoming an object of increasing interest every year, and is annually visited by many thousands. A very commodious house has been erected upon its summit, where refreshments can be obtained, and lodging or board if desired.

The following quotation is made principally on account of its reference to the character of the people as connected with the place.

Says a professional gentleman who had resided sometime in the vicinity of Princeton. "I am inclined to think that our surroundings have much to do with the moral as well as the physical of our nature. This pure air and these grand old hills have had much to do with the rearing of a noble race of people in this town. They are large-hearted, sober, sound, industrious, intellectual, reliable, religious; and if of late years there has been any falling off in this respect, it is doubtless due, in part, to the fact that the people have been too much immersed in business to breathe in and enjoy what nature offers to them in hills, and valleys, and beautiful scenery. They have also cut down their large trees, which have a moral influence upon the character."

The suggestion here made, that the character of a people is materially affected by the place of residence, contains much truth, and becomes more marked where the same people continue in the same place through several generations. Both history and philosophy confirm the correctness of this statement. It is an established fact, we believe, that in a rough, hill country, with a productive soil and interspersed with valleys, we always find a strong and vigorous race of people, distinguished for energy, enterprise, and self-reliance. On account of the ruggedness, or unevenness of the ground, and the necessity of much exercise in early life, the muscles and bones become better developed, thereby resulting in a stronger and larger frame-work of the whole body. Thus in the times of Joshua, when some spies reported that they had seen the Anakims—giants—in the land, we are told they lived "*in the hill country.*" As a general principle, we believe the tallest and largest people have occupied a hilly and mountainous region of country. In fact, wherever there exists a strong, healthy and well-developed physical system, we most always find positive, marked traits of character, and, if the individual or a people so organized are trained up under the proper educational and moral influences, it generally results in the qualities here described, viz: "large-hearted, sober, sound, industrious, intellectual, reliable, religious." But it is not the soil, the trees, the rocks, and the hills alone that develop these qualities, but outward surroundings, extensive prospects, and beautiful natural scenery have great influence. The extent of this influence, however, and the appreciation of such conditions in life depend much upon the individual's education and taste.

It is a law in mental science that the study of great subjects and principles enlarges and expands the mind. Certainly, then, mag-

nificent prospects and splendid scenery should refine and elevate the feelings, and if the handywork of the Almighty is properly recognized, such influences must purify and ennoble the moral sentiments. If the grand prospects and picturesque scenery obtained on these hills attract strangers here from great distances, if these scenes afford them so much delight and pleasure in a few days' stay, surely the permanent residents who from infancy have enjoyed these superior natural advantages should by these means be improved, become a happier, a better, a nobler race of people. We believe not only in the correctness of the theory, but that such has actually been its practical operations in this place. With the advantages, then, here described as favorable to health, it may be pertinent to inquire, What has been their practical effect? And though we cannot gauge or measure the exact amount of health or disease in a place for a given time, a very correct approximation may be made towards it. While this can be done best by way of comparison, much allowance must be made for the difference in the age, the pursuit and character of a people, as well as in the peculiar situation and exposure of places. From the Registration Report of deaths in Massachusetts, which has been now published some thirty years, and is considered very correct, these facts are gathered:

From 1860 to 1870, the rate of mortality in the whole State, on an average for each year, was one death to fifty-three persons living; in Worcester County it was one death to fifty-five; and in Princeton, one to sixty. The average age of all persons dying in the State, from 1860 to 1870, was twenty-eight years (omitting the fraction); in Worcester County it was thirty, but in Princeton it was fifty-one years. That is, human life on an average is twenty-three years longer here than the average throughout the State, and twenty-one longer here than the average in the whole county of Worcester. In Boston, the average age at death for these ten years was twenty-three and forty-three one-hundredths; in Worcester, twenty-three and thirty-eight one-hundredths—almost alike—and at the same time the average in Princeton was fifty-one and sixty-seven one-hundredths—more than twice as much. From 1860 to 1870, we find thirty-two persons died in this town over eighty years of age, and ten over ninety! In reference to these facts and figures, it may be said, in order to make a fair comparison, the population of one city should be compared with that of another, and the health of a people living in a rural district or country town with that of a people similarly situated. This, we admit, would be a more equal or just comparison,

but our object is simply to institute some general comparisons as to the differences in relative mortality and average length of life among people differently situated. While it was quite natural to take the whole State as one point, it seemed very proper to take the County of Worcester as another. In the latter, there is only one city, with several large towns and villages; the County is made up mostly of a country or rural population—in fact, the inhabitants of a very large number of towns are engaged almost wholly in agricultural pursuits. Now, there may be a few of those towns and perhaps several in the western part of the State which can present as good a record for health as Princeton, and, possibly, three or four of them a better; but, while we admit this, we maintain that there is not another town in Massachusetts which has equal advantages for health, combined at the same time with such an amount of grand and beautiful scenery. The place is favorably situated for summer visitors, being located in the central part of the State, and only a few hours' ride from the sea-board and three or four of the largest cities in New England. It is not strange, then, that the town should become, especially in summers, a favorite resort for invalids and others seeking health, rest, recreation and pleasant scenery.

But before alluding farther to the great change witnessed here by the introduction of summer company, I wish to say something respecting the profession I represent, which may be due to a noble science, just to the dead and courteous to the living. More than half a century ago, a gentleman of wealth and culture commenced spending his summers here, influenced, doubtless, in part, no less by the natural scenery and salubrity of the place than by the richness and fertility of its soil. His mortal remains rest near where we are now assembled, and, as a friend of science and humanity, I wish on this occasion to pay a passing tribute to his memory. I refer to Ward Nicholas Boylston. Having his birth and education in Boston, while a young man he visited London, in 1775, where he afterwards resided for over twenty-five years. When there, he became familiarly acquainted with the celebrated Dr. John Hunter and other eminent medical philosophers, and partly by means of this acquaintance, and partly from the fact that he had had two uncles—distinguished members of this profession—he became greatly interested in all matters pertaining to medicine. Consequently, upon his return to our country, in the year 1800, among his first acts was three liberal donations to Harvard University, to establish, 1st, a medical library; 2nd, to found an anatomical museum; and 3rd, to furnish prize



medals for successful dissertations on difficult medical subjects. By means of this last bequest, many valuable essays, constituting already several volumes, have been prepared on some of the most important and perplexing questions in medicine, and these contributions will doubtless continue as long as there is any need of the science. The name of "*Boylston*" is honored medically above all others, by being attached to a medical library, an anatomical museum, a medical society and prize medals; and thus by these means, in the language of a distinguished writer, he "has done more towards raising the standard of the medical profession in this Commonwealth than all others out of the profession." The inhabitants of this town have also occasion to hold him in grateful remembrance for his benefaction in land given to the parish, and in money for the erection of a building for town purposes. Nor can we here withhold memorable mention of the generous bequest, given mainly for parish purposes, more recently by a grandson, bearing in full his name, and who was connected with that profession which the donations already mentioned were intended to promote.

From the high commendations of this town as a healthy place, it might be inferred that it is a poor place for physicians; it certainly is for *poor* ones. Perhaps in no one thing is the good sense and intelligence of a community better displayed or tested than by their course on the subject of medicine, as well as in the character of the medical men they employ. We take pleasure in stating that no empiric or irregular practitioner ever found encouragement enough here to warrant a permanent residence, and it has been generally understood that the demand for what are denominated "patent medicines" was always very limited. The medical profession has uniformly been represented here by men of a high order. As early as in 1758, the first physician, Dr. Zachariah Harvey, came here from Shrewsbury and located in the eastern part of the town. He took a leading part in its civil affairs, as may be inferred from the numerous offices he held. He was the first district clerk, and the petition to the General Court for an act of incorporation appears in his handwriting, and the Court having passed the act, sent it to Dr. Harvey, instructing him to call the inhabitants together for accepting this act of incorporation. At the first town meeting of which any record exists, Dr. Harvey was chosen Moderator, Town Clerk, Chairman of the Selectmen, Chairman of the Assessors, and Agent or representative to the General Court—a plurality of offices, we think, never held before or since by any one individual.

Though the members of this profession, since Dr. Harvey's day, may not have been honored so much here with town offices, they have received the highest of all honors, in that they have commanded the universal confidence of the community, and have brought to their service such an amount of ability, skill and fidelity as is rarely found in a country town. One of the greatest blessings that any people can possess, is a kind, skillful, and thoroughly educated physician—a fact to which individuals and families afflicted with much sickness and suffering will readily testify. With such a physician has this community now for some years past been favored, and if invalids or visitors from abroad while here require a medical adviser, they can nowhere, in my opinion, fall into better or safer hands.

With reference to this town becoming a resort for summer company, it should be remarked that it was a thing never once contemplated by the inhabitants here, until persons from abroad first came from summer to summer to spend a few days or weeks, partly on the ground of some connexion or acquaintance, and partly in pursuit of health; then strangers, seeing the advantages of the place, sought accommodations at the public house or in some private families. Prior to 1850, there were comparatively but few visitors in the summer time, though the number would have been much larger provided accommodations could have been obtained. About this time, the only public house in the place—the Wachusett—on account of this demand, was enlarged, to which far more extensive additions have since been made; two other large public houses have also been erected, besides which many private dwellings have been opened to receive summer visitors. And now for twenty years, just in proportion as the accommodations were enlarged, the company increased, so that the demand has been constantly greater than the supply. To such an extent has this change been carried, that the boarders here in midsummer will number about five hundred, and if all the different individuals that spend here a day or more during the season are counted, the number will be very much larger; in this estimate, no account is made of the company that come to visit only the Mountain. In reviewing the character of this company, two things attract notice; one is, that the same company continue to come year after year, and that, in leaving, they engage rooms for another year; the other point is, that this company has generally been composed of a most intelligent and substantial class of persons. Says a discriminating person who has always been on the ground, "A large portion of them have been of no ordinary stamp; people

of wealth, learning and intellect, of high standing in society, and, in many cases, the pride of New England."

The question was put to an individual of varied experience and extended observation, why he resorted in the summer to this town, and he gave briefly these three reasons: "First, to breathe its pure air; second, to see its charming scenery; and third, to be well fed." The two first reasons here given we have already discussed in their bearings on health, and as constituting leading attractions to the place; but the last reason—*good living*—if it is not more important, certainly is more powerful in its influence than all the others. And whenever there shall be found any scrimping or neglect here, it will tell at once, and most effectively, too, upon the numbers and character of your visitors. By the opening of the new railroad, rendering hereafter access to the town far more convenient, a gradual increase of company may reasonably be expected; and we are strongly inclined to the conviction that the country town and rural district will in time become places more and more of summer resort, instead of the seaboard and the fashionable watering-places.

There is one topic more, closely identified with the interests of the place and the exhibition of this day, that it seems proper and just should be discussed somewhat in detail. It has been stated that the principal business of the town was agricultural, and that it was particularly distinguished for pasturage or grazing. Such has always been its reputation. As early as in 1793, Rev. Mr. Whitney, in his history of Worcester County, says of it, "The finest beef is fatted here, and vast quantities of butter and cheese produced, and from the appearance of their buildings and farms, we must judge the people are very industrious." Soon afterwards President Dwight, of Yale College, in a visit to the place, describes it as a "rich grazing township," and adds, "The houses of the inhabitants and the appearance of their farms are sufficient indications of their prosperity, and the people are distinguished for industry, sobriety and sound morals."

The complimentary reference by these two writers to the habits and character of the people, made more than three-quarters of a century ago, we think still holds good, but as to the "vast quantities of butter and cheese produced," this remark will not strictly apply at the present day. It has been found that for the profitable manufacture of cheese, larger dairies than are kept here are necessary, and within a few years this business has become more and more concentrated, being carried on by the aid of steam-power. But the making of butter here has always been an important item of business, and the



butter has generally commanded the highest prices in the market, and when presented at public fairs, has frequently obtained premiums for its superior qualities. The soil is better adapted for grazing than anything else, and the interest of the farmer has centered mainly around this point. But the interest even here has been limited in its character; fifty or one hundred years ago, it consisted almost wholly in the fattening of cattle, but of late years, more in the rearing of good stock. And the interest in stock has been confined principally to oxen and cows; a few individuals have been interested in sheep; a few in the improvement of horses; but there has not been that interest in swine and poultry as found in many other places.

One of the leading features of the stock raised here was that it consisted for a long time of *native breed*; this was a marked characteristic, for which the town received much credit at the public fairs. But of late years, valuable additions have been made of imported stock, especially in that called the Jersey, so that the interest in this direction is well sustained. While it is desirable to secure all the advantages that can be obtained in stock, imported and mixed, still, we should not *neglect improvement in the native breed*. An important topic is here involved, and should be carefully considered by parties interested. Fashion and fancy, as in other things, may possibly here lead astray.

There has not been the interest manifested here in the improved cultivation of field crops and vegetables as is found in many other places, though the land in some parts of the town must be well adapted for such purposes. Neither has there been so much attention paid to the cultivation of fruit, partly from the fact that much of the land, from its coldness, moisture and exposure, is not well suited for this purpose. Perhaps, on this same account, there has not been so much interest in the cultivation of ornamental trees and flowers as there might be, but we would suggest that more attention in this direction, if it does not pay in dollars and cents, will return an abundant compensation in improving the health, in refining the feelings, and advancing to a higher culture and purer life all the better qualities of the mind and the heart.

The most marked evidence of interest, as well as of improvement in agricultural matters connected with the place, is found in the part which its inhabitants have taken in public exhibitions, particularly in the character and the amount of premiums they have obtained. We venture the opinion that no other town in the State, with a

corresponding number of inhabitants, can show a record anything like it. As no complete file of the Reports of the Societies and Exhibitions, with which it has taken part, can be found, we collect from such as we have access to, the following exhibit of premiums :

An agricultural society was formed in 1818, at Worcester, for the County, in which Princeton has always been well represented by members and in premiums. A late report contains among its members the names of forty-three persons from this town, and shows that the late Hon. John Brooks held the office of vice-president from 1847 to 1855, and then of president from 1855 to 1858. By the reports, from 1820 to 1840, it appears that Princeton was frequently represented at its shows by fat cattle, working oxen, with cows and young stock, but from 1840 to 1870, scarcely an exhibition took place without some representation of this kind, and on which more or less premiums were drawn. The names of some persons receiving premiums most common were Reed, Brooks, Watson, Whitney, Boyles, Gill, Beaman, Boylston, Danforth, Roper, Crawford, Thompson, Garfield, &c.

From 1849 to 1859, the town was awarded, at Worcester, in premiums, \$729, divided as follows: Ploughing match, fourteen different premiums, \$101; bulls, fourteen different premiums, \$80; working oxen, ten premiums, and steers, twenty-seven premiums, making \$146; milk cows, eleven premiums, and heifers, twenty premiums, \$205; butter, ten premiums, \$58. Many of these premiums were the first or highest given, and in several of the years, Princeton drew a larger amount of money than any other town except Worcester. From 1853 to 1860—seven years—the amount of premiums drawn at Worcester, Fitchburg and Barre—three separate societies—was \$1,816.

About 1850, the district society—called the Worcester North—was formed, including the towns in this part of the County, meeting at Fitchburg; Princeton, being included, sent its stock to the exhibitions of this society more than to Worcester. From 1860 to 1870, it drew here in premiums, principally on stock, \$1,543, receiving every year a larger amount of money than any other town in the district except Fitchburg. During these same ten years, it received in premiums for what stock was exhibited also at Worcester, \$724, and also at Worcester West, holding its shows in Barre, \$364. We have, then, for these years, awarded to Princeton in premiums from the three societies, \$2,631, given mostly for stock. For the four last years, the amount was large—for 1867, \$343; 1868, \$414; 1869, \$477;

and 1870, \$372. We do not include here the premiums obtained at the New England Fairs, by John Brooks, Jr., for his Jersey herd and other stock, which have always attracted much attention wherever they have been exhibited. The inquiry naturally arises, What other small town in the County or the State can show such an exhibit of premiums?

A town that presents such a list of premiums obtained at exhibitions ten miles distant, should certainly get up a good cattle-show and fair at home. It should not allow its reputation, thus established by exhibitions abroad, to suffer by any ordinary show upon its own premises. A Farmers' Club of eighty members, with a full treasury, with a name honored wherever known, should see to it, moreover, that every new exhibition is an improvement upon the preceding one, and that it does not fall behind any similar town-show either in the County or State.

For this increased interest in agriculture, the place is greatly indebted to the labors and example of one who deserves more than a passing notice. I refer to John Brooks, a native of this town, who died in the spring of 1863, on the farm where he was born and had spent most of his days. His deep and abiding interest in all matters pertaining to agriculture, especially in the improvement of stock, is well known to you; but his reputation and influence were not confined to any narrow bounds or limits. For some time he was the most prominent man in agriculture in Worcester County, and stood among the foremost in the State; perhaps no one excelled him in a knowledge of stock-raising. At the time of his decease he was a member of the State Board of Agriculture—representing the Worcester district—and was associated with Dr. George B. Loring and Marshall P. Wilder, on an important committee. In submitting the report of this committee, Dr. Loring paid the following just tribute to the memory of your fellow-townsmen:—"The sudden decease of Mr. Brooks deprived this Board of one of its wisest counsellors, the agricultural community of one of its most zealous and efficient members, and the Commonwealth of one of its most useful and exemplary citizens. He was in all respects one of the yeomanry of our state. Possessed of an ample fortune, he chose the rural walks of life as best fitted for the exercise of his industry and skill, and most promotive of the best faculties of his mind and heart. For his profession he had a profound respect, and was never weary of discussing the position maintained by the farmers of the Commonwealth as the perpetuators of her vigor and prosperity. He

was careful in his investigations, acute in his observations, and prudent in his endeavors to make such improvements on his own soil, and among his flocks and herds, as would commend themselves to every practical and enterprising farmer. He had great honesty and integrity of character, and was remarkable for a tenacity of purpose which usually insured success to his endeavors; and he belonged to that generation of men who gave a dignity and importance to our rural districts, which the temptations and larger opportunities of our young cities threaten to impair. He was a citizen whose example was worthy of imitation, and whose position and pursuits were most useful and valuable."

In considering the various changes that have occurred here, there is one change more important than all others, and which should always command our most serious attention. Many of the changes that have been alluded to, or described on the present occasion, may not concern us as individuals, but there is *one change* which we must all meet, no matter what may be our situation in life, how excellent the constitution, or how perfect the health. Both the law of nature and the command of inspiration unite in the verdict, that death must pass upon all men. Your lot may be cast in the healthiest spot in the world, where life is prolonged far beyond the average, still death will come.

Every returning anniversary, like the present occasion, reminds us of this change. During the past year, one of the most active members of your Club has fallen with the harness on, and since your organization, ten members have been carried to that "bourne," from whence "no traveller returns." The coming year will doubtless witness similar changes, and happy, thrice happy shall we be, when the summons comes, if we are prepared to give an account of our stewardship, and hear from the Master that blessed plaudit, "*Well done.*"









